

The background is a vertical painting of a landscape. In the center, a single, rounded green tree stands on a rocky, reddish-brown outcrop. The sky is filled with soft, white and blue clouds. The overall style is painterly and evocative.

NEW LIFE RISING

*Devotions on the Journey
from Death to Life*

LENT / EASTER 2023



New Life Rising: Devotions on the Journey from Death to Life
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READING PLAN

ASH WEDNESDAY

World Weary in the Garden of Gethsemane

LENT: PART 1

Against the Lenten Frenzy

LENT: PART 2

The Ever-Present Memento Mori

LENT: PART 3

Dying to the Indispensable Self

PALM SUNDAY

Descending the Summit of Success

GOOD FRIDAY

My Last Supper with the Family of God

EASTER: PART 1

Exiles All the Way Home

EASTER: PART 2

A Waste of Time, a Work of Love

EASTER: PART 3

Alive Upon Arrival

AFTERWORD

The Sobriety of Forever

W

ELCOME. This year, you are invited on a journey through the somber season of Lent, into the dark depths of Good Friday, and out into the marvelous light of Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In these pages, you will be led through the landscape of Jesus' homeland and the journey he takes through times of confusion, despair, hope, and into everlasting joy.

As you know, the church is at a pivotal point where it seems like familiar ideas, methods, and comforts are dying. It is natural to fear a sense of decay—whether physical, moral, political, or relational—but the season of Lent and Easter show that sometimes things must die in order to bear a new fullness of life.

Through the devotional writings and artistic illustrations in this special issue from *Christianity Today*, a variety of pastors, theologians, and thinkers offer their perspective on what we must let die in our day and age, in order to come to terms with reality and live in the renewal that Easter promises. The term *memento mori* is a Latin expression symbolizing the reminder that death is inevitable. As we journey through this season of Lent and Easter together, let's wonder and discuss what we believe needs to die in order to lead to vibrant life in our unique contexts of vocation and community.

We hope this helps you embrace the gift of the gospel and leads to deeper life and love, both in this world and the one to come.

PART I

THE WILDERNESS

*JESUS' LIFE IN ITS TRIALS
AND TEMPTATIONS*

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

LUKE 22:42



I

**WORLD WEARY
IN THE
GARDEN OF
GETHSEMANE**



CHINE MCDONALD

LUKE 22:41-42

*He withdrew about a
stone's throw beyond
them, knelt down
and prayed, "Father,
if you are willing,
take this cup from
me; yet not my will,
but yours be done."*





FIND THE Germans have a word that perfectly encapsulates a particular feeling that's been lingering within me lately. They call this one *weltschmerz*, while the French refer to it as the *mal du siècle*. Though foreign to me, these words describe a very familiar feeling: a melancholy ache in the pit of my stomach when I realize the world is not as it should be—that selfishness and greed pervade the nations, that humans are capable of indescribable acts of violence against each other, that the most terrible things can happen without cause or reason.

Today, I sat with a friend whose daughter died last year at just 11 days old. The death of a child is a pain so unbearable that it's terrifying to look this grief in the eye, even from a distance. That we live in a world where such a thing can happen is a heart-ache that looms under the surface for many of us. *Weltschmerz* describes this realization—an epiphany of sorts where we resonate with what philosopher Frederick C. Beiser defines as “a mood of weariness or sadness about life arising from the acute awareness of evil and suffering.”

Perhaps it was a feeling that was easier to ignore before, when rolling cable news banners and social media alerts did not invade our safe spaces. For many of us, the badness feels ever-present now and the shadow of world-weariness is able to grow until it feels suffocating in a way that was not possible before.

Like many other millennials, I have been gripped by an acute sense that the world is getting worse, with disaster around every corner. From climate catastrophes to polarization and political unrest to economic uncertainty, we have been forced to confront our own helplessness.

I am someone who likes to fix things. If I see a problem or witness someone suffering, I can't help but try to come to the rescue. I have grown addicted to the affirmation that comes with playing the hero. But part of the discomfort of *weltschmerz* is the realization that I can't mend the world's brokenness. I am subject

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Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

JOHN 12:24-26

*Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel
of wheat falls to the ground and dies,
it remains only a single seed.
But if it dies, it produces many seeds.*

JOHN 12:24

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